TEMPORAL EXPRESSIONS IN TAMIL

S. RAJENDRAN

The temporal expressions in a language have to state 'When?', 'How long?' and 'How often?' an event happens or a state exists. The first question gives 'time-when',the second 'duration' and the third 'frequency'.

TIME-WHEN

Time-when is of two types : simple time and relative time. If the time is identified without relating it to another time, then it is simple; if it is identified relating it to another time, then it is relative time.

Simple time :

maNi 'hour', inflected for dative *-ku*, when collocates with cardinal numerals, represents clock time; for example *pattu maNikku* 'at 10 0' clock'.

ne:RRu 'yesterday', *inRu* 'today' and *na:Lai* 'tomorrow' are also inflect for dative *-ku* optionally while denoting simple time.

ka:lai 'morning', *ma:lai* 'evening', *pakal* 'day time' and *iravu* 'night' inflect for locative *-il* while denoting simple time; for example, *ka:laiyil* 'in the morning'. But the same type of time units *mattiya:nam* 'afternoon', *sa:yanka:lam* 'evening' and *ra:ttiri* 'night' generally do not inflect for *-il*. Similarly the other units such as *kiZamai* 'day', *ma:tam* 'month', *varuSam/a:NTu* 'year' generally do not inflect for *-il*.

The units of season, both simple and compound forms, inflect for *-il;* for example, *ko:Taiyil* 'in summer', *ko:Tai ka:lattil* 'in summer season'.

The names of months inflect for *-il;* for example *ekTo:paril* 'in the month of October'.

It can be generalized that *-ku* marks the point of time, except in the case of *ne:RRu, inRu* and *na:Lai* and *-il* marks the period of time.

Relative time :

Relative time is more or less parallel to relative space. Tamil uses the spatial expressions of horizontal axis for expressing relative time.

Anterior and posterior relations :

The spatial postpositions *munna:l* 'in front' and *pinna:l* 'back' are used to denote the time relation 'anterior' and 'posterior' respectively. The time in front is considered as earlier one and the time at the back is considered as later one. Similarly the event in front is earlier and the event at the back is later one.

avan pattu maNikku munna:l vanta:n 'He came before 10 O' clock'

avan patu maNikku pinna:l vanta:n 'He came after 10 O' clock'

avan enakku munna:l vanta:n 'He came earlier to me'

avan enakku pinna:l vanta:n 'He came earlier to me'

The other synonymous forms used in written language in the place of *munna:l* are *mun, munnar, munne:* and *munpu*. Similarly the synonymous forms used in the place of *pinna:l* are *pin, pinnar, pinne:, pinpu piRpa:Tu, piRaku* and *appuRam* ('that side'). It should be noted that *piRaku* and *appuRam* do not represent front-back axis; they rather belong to before-after axis. Note the following sentences.

avaL enakku appuRam irukkiRa:L 'She

sits after me'

avaL enakku piRaku irukkiRa : L 'She sits after me'

The use of *appuRam* and *piRaku* to denote the time relation 'after' is worth noticing. The counterpart of *appuRam* is *ippuRam* 'that side' which is not used with the temporal meaning 'before'.

me : le : 'above' can also be used with the meaning 'after'. The interesting thing is that in the case of horizontal axis, the positive terms *munna : l* 'in front' is uded to denote 'anterior' time and the negative term *pinna : l* 'back' is used to denote 'posterior' time, but in the case of vertical axis, the positive term *me : le :* 'above' is used to denote 'posterior' time and not the 'anterior' time.

avan pattu maNikku me : le vanta : n 'He came after 10 O' clock'.

The counterpart of *me : le* is *ki : Ze :* 'below', which is not used with the temporal meaning 'before'.

The use of spatial adjuncts for sequencing time reveals the cannonical encounter of Tamil speakers with the time in relation to space; for them the time in front is anterior time or the event in front is anterior event; similarly the time and event 'at that side' is anterior and time and event 'above' is posterior.

Instead of postpositions mentioned above, we can also use the pastparticiple form *kaZintu* of the verb *kaZi* 'pass', but *kaZintu* cannot be used for sequencing events.

avaL pattu maNi kaZintu vanta : L 'She came after 10 O' clock'.

This temporal use of *kaZintu* is comparable to its use in spatial expression.

pu : na : kaZintu ba : mbe : irukkiRatu 'The Bombay is after Poona'

The adverbial formator *a : y* or *a : ka* combine with *munpu* 'in front', *munnatu* 'that which is at the front' *pinpu* 'back' and *pinnatu* 'that which is at the back' forming adjuncts such as *munpa : ka, munnata : ka, pinpa : ka* and *pinnata : ka* which can be used in written language to denote anterior event.

aTuttu 'next' is used to denote the occurrence of an event immediately following another event. *aTuttu* in this sence collocates with the gerundive form (inflected for accusative *-ai*) of the verb denoting the earlier event; it can be added directly after the subject of the first event inflected for accusative *-ai* dropping the gerundival form.

avaL avan pa : Tuvatai aTuttu pa : Tina : L 'She sang after he finished singing'

avaL avanai aTuttu pa : Tina : L 'She sang after him'

toTarntu 'following' can replace aTuttu.

avaL avanait toTarntu pa : Tina : L 'She sang following him'

aTuttu and *toTarntu* are the pastparticiple forms of the verbs *aTu* 'go near' and *toTar* 'follow' respectively.

Simultaneous relation :

The simultanity of two events is expressed by the adjunct *poZutu* 'time'; *poZutu* in this sense collocates with relative participle form of the verb denoting the first event.

avaL na : n paTikkum camayattil/ne : rattil vanta : L 'She came while I was reading'

Another peculiar way of expressing simultaneous relation is the use of locative *-il; -il* added with the verbal nouns of *-kai* ending type (of the first event) gives the sense 'at that time'.

na : n aRaikkuL eTTip pa : rkkaiyil avaL eZutikkoNTirunta : L 'When I peeped inside the room, she was writing'

Consequtive relation :

uTan denotes the occurrence of an event immediately as a consequence of the earlier action; *uTan* in this sense is added after the non-finite form of the verb denoting the first event.

pirasiTaNTu vantavuTan ku : TTam toTankiyatu 'As soon as the president came, the meeting was started'.

The clitique *-um* added to the gerundival form

of the verb denoting the first action, also gives the sense 'as soon as'..

PirasiTaNTu vantatum ku:TTam toTankiyatu 'As soon as the president came, the meeting was started'

Interposal relation :

iTaiyil denotes the occurrence of an event in between two events. *iTaiyil* in this sense is added after the coordinated phrase of the two events between which the third one occurs.

na:n avan pa:TuvataRkum avaL pa:TuvataRkum iTaiyil p:Tine:n 'I sang in between the performance of his singing and her singing'

iTaiyil can be added directly after the conjoined phrase of the subjects of the two events droping the gerundival forms.

na:n avanukkum avaLukkum iTaiyil pa:Tine:n 'I sang between he and she (i.e. between the performances of their singing)'

Interior relation :

The postposition *uL/uLLe:* collocated with the dative base of temporal units gives the meaning 'within'.

avaL pattu maNikkuLLe:vantuviTuva:L 'She will come within 10 O' clock

In the case of clock time, this relation seems similar to the 'anterior' relation expressed by *munna:l*, But the defference can be seen when *uL/uLLe:* is used also with other units; for example, *avan januvarikku munna:l* vantuviTuva:n means 'He will come before (the beginning) of January'; but *avan januvarikkuL vantuviTuva:n* means 'He will come before the end of January'.

Units of time :

The understanding of temporal expression demands the understanding of temporal units. The temporal units exhibit how temporal sphere is broken down by taxonomy. The major units of time are given below in hierarchical order.

vina:Ti/sekaNTu 'second'
nimiSam/miniTTu 'minute'
maNi 'hour'; maNikku:r 'hour'
ka:lai 'morning'; mattiya:nam 'afternoon';
ma:lai/sa:yanka:lam 'evening'
pakal 'day'; iravu/ra:ttiri 'night'
kiZamai 'day'; na:L 'day'; tiyati 'day'
va:ram 'week'
ma:tam 'month'
ka:lam 'season of the year'
a:NTu/varuSam 'year'

The units of time are either calendarical or non-calendarical. The units like *na:L* 'day' and *va:ram* 'week' can designate either units of measurement or units which not only have a given length of time but also begin and end at a given point. *va:ram* 'week' can be a period of seven days; in its second sense *va:ram* begins with *na:yiRRukkiZamai* 'Sunday' and ends in canikkiZamai 'Saturday'. In the first sense the units are marked for the feature '– Calendar' and in the second sense for the feature '+ Calendar'. Certain sets show part-whole relation; for example, *na:L* 'day' and *ma:tam* 'month' and *na:L* 'day' and *va:ram* 'week' show part-whole relation and month contains thirty days and weak contains seven days. But this relationship does not apply between some other units, for example, between *ma:tam* 'month' and *va:ram* 'week'. Another peculiarity of these sets of units is certains co-occurrence restrictions. All time units, considered simply as units of measurement, represent periods; but as designators of calendar orientation, *vina:Ti, nimiSam* and *maNi* denote points (clock time) and not periods of time; in otherwords, these units when marked for the feature '+ Calendar' and marked for the feature '– Period'. It should be noted that *maNikku:r* is different from *maNi* by implying the features '– Calendar' and '+ Period'. Though *maNikku:r* is used for the measurement of clock time, only *maNi* is used while adding fractions of an hour; for example, *iraNTu maNikku:ril* is two hours', *iraNTumaNi pattu numiSattil* 'in two hours and ten minutes'. Other units like *na:L* 'day', etc.

are always marked for the feature '+ Period'. So it is nonsensical to say *a:RumaNi a:Ru nimiSattai viTa ku:Tutal* '* 6 O' Clock is longer than six minutes.'

There is no general nouns expressing the meanings of *ka:lai* 'morning', *mattiya:nam* 'afternoon' and *ma:lai* 'evening' and *pakal* 'day' *iravu* 'night'; and these units cannot be used for the measurement of time; for example we do not say *na:n avaLai mu:nRu ka:laikaLukku munna:l cantitten:n* 'I met her three mornings ago'. Thus these units as well as *ka:lam* 'season of the year' are marked for the feature '– Callendar' and '+ Period.'

kiZamai is different from *na:L* and *tiyati* as it occurs as a unit of compound denoting days of a week; for example *tinkaTkiZamai* 'monday'. *tiyati* is different from *na:L* by always implying the feature '+ Calendar'; *na:L* is generally used to denote non-calendar time, except in written language where it can replace *tiyati* while denoting the day of a month.

The secondary units of time form different subcategories under major systems.

The seven compounds of *kiZamai* 'day' stand to denote the days of the week. They are: *na:yiRRikiZamai* 'sunday', *tinkaTkiZamai* 'monday', *cevva:ykiZamai* 'tuesday', *putankiZamai* 'wednesday', *viya:ZakkiZamai* 'thursday', *veLLikkiZamai* 'friday' and *canikkiZamai* 'saturday'.

Days of month:

Ordinal numerals co-occur with *tiyati* 'day' denoting days of the month. For example, *onRa:m tiyati* '1st day', *iraNTa:m tiyati* '2nd day', etc. (*–a:m* is the ordinal marker.). To denote 1st and last day of month *mutal tiyati* 'first day' and *kaTaisi tiyati* 'last day' can be used.

Months of the year:

Generally English months are followed in Tamil. But for astrological reasons Tamil months (which are of course borrowed from Sanskrit) are used. The months as used in Tamil are: *januvari* 'January', *pepravari* 'February', *ma:rccu* 'March', *e:pral* 'April', *me:* 'May', *ju:n* 'june', *ju:lai* 'July', *a:gasTu* 'August', *sepTember* 'September', *akTo:bar* 'October', *navambar* 'November', and *Tisambar* 'December'. The list of Tamil months are: *cittirai* 'April-May', *vaika:si* 'May-June', *a:ni* 'June-July', *a:Ti* 'July-August', *a:vaNi* 'August-September', *puraTTa:si* 'September-October', *aipasi* 'October-November', *ka:rttikai* 'November-December', *ma:rkaZi* 'December-January', *tai* 'January-February', *ma:si* 'February-March' and *pankuni* 'March-April'.

Sasons of the year:

The seasons of the year are given below and are ordered according to Tamil months.

iLave:nir ka:lam (cittirai to vaika:si) 'Spring'

mutuve:nir ka:lam; ko:Tai ka:lam (a:ni to a:Ti) 'Summer'

ka:r ka:lam; maZaikka:lam (a:vaNi to puraTTa:si) 'Autumn'

ku:tir ka:lam; ilaiyitir ka:lam (aippasi to ka:rttikai) (Autumn)

munpani ka:lam; kuLir ka:lam (ma:rkaZi to tai) 'Winter'

pinpani ka:lam; vasanta ka:lam (ma:si to pankuni) 'Spring'

The secondary temporal systems discussed above are hierarchical and cyclic in nature. They are ordered in terms of successivity; so we can have the analytic statements such as *tinkaTkiZamaikkum manna:l na:yiRRukkiZamai varukiRatu* 'Sunday comes before Monday', *naa:yiRRukkiZamaiyai aTuttu tinkaTkiZamai varukiRatu* 'Monday comes immediately after Sunday' and *tinkaTkiZamaikkum putankiZamaikkum iTaiyil cevva:ykiZamai varukiRatu* 'Tuesday comes in betwen Monday and Wednesday'. Though there is conventional first and last member in these sets the cyclicality is still maintained; for example, the sentence *kaNNan canikkiZamai*

vanta:n; ko:pa:lan aTutta na:L vanta:n 'Kannan came on Saturday and Gopalan came on the next day' implies that 'Gopalan came on Sunday'. So the features 'Cyclic' and 'Contiguity' (either preceding or following) are important for the semantic analysis of calendar time.

Calendar time inclusion :

Temporal expression for mentioning a position in calendar time is more or less similar to the expression of a position in space. For example,

a:yiratti toLLa:yiratti eNpatti iraNTa:m a:NTu janavari ma:tam patta:m tiyati veLLikkiZamai ma:laiyil a:Ru maNikku avan vanta:n 'He came at 6 O' clock in the evening of 10th January, 1982'.

The inclusion of one calendar time in the other is in hierarchical order from higher units to lower units.

Deictic definiteness of calendar meanings :

Definitness is usually present in the calendar terms as they are used in deictic sense or as they have inherent definiteness of proper names. In the following sentences

avan tinkaTkizamai varuva:n 'He will come on Monday'

avan janavari ma:tam varuva:n 'He will come in the month of January'

if we forget the tense carried by the verb, the temporal phrase *tinkaTkiZamai* can be interpreted as 'the Monday immediately after now' or 'the Monday immediately before now'; similarly *janavari ma:tam* can be interpreted as 'the January immediately following the present month' or as 'the January preceding the present month'. Adjectivals are used to link the calendar time with the speech time.

Adjectival modification of temporal units :

The temporal adjectives *aTutta* 'next' and *varukiRa* 'that which is coming' (the relative participle forms of the verbs *aTu* 'to go near' and *va:* 'come' respectively) modify the calendar time into a time later to speech time. Similarly the adjectivals *po:na* 'that which is going' and *kaZinta* 'that which is passing' (the relative participle forms of the verbs *po:* 'go' and *kaZi* 'pass' respectively) modify the calendar time into a time earlier to speech time.

Not all the temporal units are modified by the above mentioned four adjectivals. *varuSam* 'year', *ma:tam* 'Month', *va:ram* 'week' and also the months of the year, days of the week and the seasons of year can be modified by these adjectivals. *ka:lai* 'morning', *mattiya:nam* 'afternoon' and *iravu* 'night' (which are non-calendarical) are not modified by these adjectivals. *varukiRa* and *po:na* do not modify the three clock time units. *maNi* 'hour' cannot be modified by all the four adjectivals. *vina:Ti* 'second' and *nimiSam* 'miniute' can be modified by *aTutta* and *kaZinta*.

The use of *aTutta* and *po:na as adjectivals needs more discussion. As we have seen aTutta* generally corefers to the point or period of time immediately following the concerned speech time and *po:la* to the preceding time. In the case of *na:L* 'day' *va:ram* 'week', *ma:tam* 'month' and *varuSam* 'year', *aTutta* refers to the calendar time which immediately follows the corresponding speech time and po:na to the preceding time; for example, *aTutta varuSam* means 'the following year' and *po:na varuSam* means 'the preceding year'. But in the case of the days of the week, the days of the month, months of the year and seasons of the year the use of *aTutta* and *po:na* have a second interpretation; for example *aTutta putan kiZamai* corefers to the Wednesday of the next week and *aTutta ju:lai* refers to the July of the next year; similarly *po:na putan kiZamai* refers to the Wednesday of the last week and *po:na ju:lai* refers to the July of the last year. *aTutta* and *po:na* in their second sense can be contrasted to the determiner *inta* 'this' in the phrases like

inta putankiZamai 'the Wednesday of this week' and *inta ju:lai* 'the July of this month'. This is because of the inclusive, hierarchical and cyclic nature of the calendar units.

Demonstrative adjectivals as modifiers of temporal units:

The demonstrative adjectives *inta* 'this' and *anta* 'that' have the deictic function of pointing and anaphoric function of coreference. *inta* corefers to the point or period of time contiguous with the speech time and *anta* corefers to the time remote to the speech time. *inta* and *anta* collocates with *ne:ram* 'time' and *camayam* 'time' giving the meanings 'this time' and 'that time' respecively.

avaL inta ne:rattil varama:TTa:L; avan purappaTukiRa anta ne:rattil varuva:L
'She will not come at this time; she will come at that time when he starts to go'

Instead of *inta* and *anta* the markers denoting contiguity and remoteness, *i-* and *a-*, respectively can be directly added to *ne:ram* and *camayam* producing *inne:ram* 'this time', *iccamayam* 'this time', *anne:ram* 'that time' and *accamayam* 'that time'. Similarly *inta* and *anta* collocate with other calendar time units for pointing and coreference. We also get the counterparts with the proximate and remote markers *i-* and *a-* added directly to the calendar time units; for example, *inta na:L/inna:L* 'this day' and *anta na:L/anna:L* 'that day'. *inta* and *anta* collocates with *ka:lattil* 'in the period' giving the meaning 'in these days and 'in those days' respectively.

The use of *inta* along with *va:ram* 'week', *ma:tam* 'month', and *varuSam* 'year' is different from the use of *inta* along with the calendar units of the days of the week, the days of the month, months of the year and the seasons of the year. For example, *inta va:ram* 'this week' includes the speech time; whereas *inta tinkaT kiZamai* 'this monday' does not include the speech time; the Monday referred to is the day which is contiguous to the speech-day, which may be earlier to the speech-day or later to the speech-day depending on the speech situation.

Use of deictic and anaphoric temporal adverbs:

The adverbs *ippoZutu* and *appoZutu* literally mean 'this time' and 'that time' respectively (*poZutu* means 'time'). They function deicticaly expressing the meaning 'now' and 'then' respectively.

avan ippoZutu vanta:n 'He came now'
avan appoZutu vanta:n 'He came then'

It should be noted that *appoZutu* deictically refers to past time only. The temporal adverbials *inne:rattil/inta ne:rattil* 'at this time' and *anne:rattil/anta ne:rattil* 'at that time' do not give the meaning 'now' and 'then'; they mean 'this sort of time' and 'that sort of time' respectively.

ippoZutu and *appoZutu* function anaphorically as synonyms of *inne:rattil/intane:rattil* and *anne:rattil/antane:rattil* respectively. In this sense *ippoZutu* and *appoZutu* act almost as the pronouns. So we can call them as protemporal adverbs.

avan paTittukkoNTirukkiRa:n. ippoZutu/inne:rattil avanai tontaravu ceyya:te:
'He is reading. Don't disturb him at this time'
avan paTittukoNTirunta:n. appoZutu avaL avanai tontaravu ceyta:L 'He was reading. At that time she disturbed him'

The adverbs *inRu* and *anRu* mean 'this day' and 'that day' respectively. *inRu* and *anRu* are different from *inna:L/intana:L* 'this day' and *anna:L/antana:L* 'that day' in the sense that the former are both deictic and anaphoric in function, whereas the latter are only anaphoric in function. Like *appoZutu*, *anRu* deictically refers to past time only; anaphoricaily it refers to both past and future time.

avan inRu vanta:n 'He came today'
avan anRu vanta:n 'He came that day'

Apart from *inRu* and *anRu* we have got temporal adverbs, *ne:RRu* 'yesterday' and *na:Lai* 'tommorow', which can be interpreted

as 'the day immediately preceding this day' and 'the day immediately following this day' respectively.

Use of other temporal adverbs :
Anteriority :

The anteriority of the occurrence of an event is expressed by the adverbials *munna:l, ne:ratte:* and *munti* (the past participle form of the verb *muntu* 'surpass'). *munna:l* is preferably used with the meaning 'beforehand' as opposed to 'afterwards'; *ne:ratte:* and *munti* are preferably used with the meaning 'earlier' as opposed to 'late'.

avaLai na:n munna:l pa:rttirukkiRe:n
'I have seen her before'
avaL vakuppukku ne:ratte:/munti vanta:L 'She came to class earlier'

Posteriority :

The posteriority of the occurrence of an event is expressed by the adverbials *pinna:l, piRaku, appuRam and pinti. pinna:l, piRaku* and *appuRam* used with the meaning 'afterwards' as opposed to 'beforehand'. *pinti* is used with the meaning 'late' as opposed to 'earlier'.

avaLai na:n pinna:l/piRaku/appuRam pa:rppe:n 'I will see her afterwards'
avaL vakuppukku pinti vanta:L 'She came to the class late'

Recentness :

The adverbial *sami:pattil* ('near-in') gives the meaning 'recently'.

na:n avaLai sami:pattil pa:rtte:n 'I saw her recently'

Quickness :

The adverbial *ci:kkirattil* ('fast-in') and *viraivil* ('fastness-in') are used with the meaning 'soon'.

na:n avaLai ci:kkirattil/viraivil pa:rppe:n
'I will see her soon'

Slowness :

The adverbial *metuva:y* ('slowly') is used with the meaning 'late' as opposed to 'soon'.

na:n avaLai metuva:y pa:rppe:n 'I will see her late'

Instantaneity :

Certain onamatopoeic expressions with the quotative verb *enRu* ('as said') is used to denote instantaneity of the occurrence of an event. The commonly used such adverbials are *caTTenRu* and *paTTenRu* meaning 'instantaneously'.

avan caTTenRu/paTTenRu conna:n 'He said instantaneously'

Quantification of time :

Temporal units can be quantified by the cardinal numerals and other quantifier adjectives like *konca* 'small', etc. The temporal units in this sense will be inflected for locative *-il* for simple quantity of time; in the case of relative quantity of time the postpositions are added to the datively inflected temporal units. For example, *orumaNikku:ril* 'in an hour', *konca ne:rattil* 'in short time', *pattu na:Tka-Lukkup piRaku* 'after ten days'.

Approximation of time

The approximation of the time is expressed by the postmodifier *po:la* (which literally means 'like') and by the premodifiers *suma:r, kiTTattaTTa* and *e:RakkuRaiya* which all can be glossed as 'approximately'.

avaL pattumaNikkup po:la vanta:L 'She came around 10 O' clock'
avaL suma:r pattu maNikku vanta:L 'She came around 10 O' clock'

DURATION

The questions like *evvaLavu ne:ram?* 'How much time?', *evvaLavu na:L* 'How many days?', etc. bring out the duration. The temporal adjuncts of duration can be divided into two types : (i) those denoting length of

time and (ii) those denoting duration from some preceding point of time.

Length of time :

The temporal nouns quantified by numerals or other quantifiers (such as *knoca* 'few', *rempa* 'many') is used to express length of time.

avaL reNTu na : L anke : tankina : L 'She stayed there for two days'

avaL knoca na : L anke : tankina : L 'She stayed there for few days'

The postmodifier *muZuvatum* added to the temporal nouns express length of time.

avaL ra : ttiri muZuvatum anke : tankina : L 'She stayed there for the whole night'

The postmodifier *po : la* and the premodifiers *suma : r, kiTTattaTTa* and *e : Rakku-Raiya* (all can be glossed as 'approximately') approximate the length of time. For example, *oru ma : tam po : la* 'about a mounth', *suma : r oru maNikku : r* 'about an hour'.

Duration from some preceding point of time :

The postpositions *mutal* 'from' and *iruntu* 'from' (added to the locatively inflected temporal units) refer to the beginning of event or state and *varai* 'up to' refer to the end of an event or state.

avan aintu maNi mutal ve : lai ceykiRa : n 'He is working from 5 O' clock'

avan pattu maNi varai ve : lai ceykiRa : n 'He is working up to 10 O' clock'

avan aintu maNiyiliruntu/maNimutal pattu maNi varai ve : lai ceykiRa : n 'He is working from 5 O' clock to 10 O' clock'

FREQUENCY

Expressions of frequency answers the questions like *ettanai taTavai?* 'How many times?' etc. Adjuncts of frequency can be divided into two : (i) those denoting definite frequency and (ii) those denoting indefinite frequency. Each group can be again subgrouped.

Definite frequency :

The adjuncts of definite frequency can be devided into adjuncts of period-frequency and adjuncts of number-frequency. The adjuncts of period-frequency denote the period of time by which the frequency is measured, while adjuncts of number-frequency express the measurement in number of times.

Period-frequency :

Use of *ovvoru* :

The prémodifier *ovvoru* added to the temporal nouns such as *na : L* 'day', *va : ram* 'week', etc. gives the meaning 'every'. The clitic *-um* is added to the temporal units for denoting the inherent emphasis in the proposition.

avaL ovvoru na : Lum kuLikkiRa : L 'She is bathing every day'

Use of to : Rum :

The postmodifier *to : Rum* added to the temporal nouns such as *na : L* 'day', *va : ram* 'week', etc. gives the meaning 'every'.

avaL na : L to : Rum kuLikkiRa : L 'She is bathing daily'

Number-frequency :

Use of taTavai :

The phrase numeral + *taTavai* gives the number of times the event expressed by the predicate has occurred. *taTavai* is used with the meaning 'time(s)'. Number-frequency answers the question *ettanai taTavai?* 'How many times?'.

avaL iraNTu taTavai ka : Smi : rukkuc cenRa : L 'She went to Kashmir twice'

Use of tirumpavum :

The adjunct *tirumpavum/mi : NTum* 'again' can be used with the meaning 'for the second time'.

avaL tirumpavum kuLitta : L 'She bathed for the second time'

Co-occurrence of phrases denoting frequency :

Period-frequency can co-occur with the number-frequency, normally the former preceding the letter; but for the sake of focusing, the order can be reversed.

avaL ovvoru na : Lum iraNTu taTavai kuLikkiRa : L 'She takes bath twice daily'.

While co-occuring with number-frequency, the phrase denoting the period-frequency can adopt a different shape; the datively inflected temporal nouns such as *maNikku : r* 'hour', *na : L* 'day', *va : ram* 'week', *ma : tam* 'month' and *varuSam* collocates with the phrase denoting number-frequency giving the meaning 'hourly', 'daily', 'weekly', 'monthly' and 'yearly' respectively.

avaL va : rattukku oru taTavai kuLikkiRa : L 'She takes bath weekly once'

The phrases denoting period-frequency can also co-occur with each other in a hierarchical relationship.

avaL ovvoru ma : tamum ovvoru na : Lum kuLikkiRa : L 'She takes bath daily every month'

The phrase denoting number-frequency can also co-occur with each other.

avan mi : NTum avaLai iraNTu taTavai cantitta : n 'He met her again twice'

Indefiite frequency :
Use of potuva : y and sa : ta : raNama : y :

The adjunct *potuva : v* and *sa : ta : raNama : y* can be used with the meaning 'generally, usually, normally'.

avan potuva : y/sa : ta : raNama : y pattu maNikku varuva : n 'Usually he comes at 10 O' clock'

Use of eppoZutum po : la :

The adjunct *eppoZutum po : la* ('like every time') can be used with the meaning 'as usual'.

avaL eppoZutum po : la pattu maNikku kuLitta : L 'As usual, she took bath at 10 O' clock'

Continuous/continual frequency :
Use of eppoZutum :

The adjunct *eppoZutum* ('all the time') is used with the meaning 'always'.

avan eppoZutum kuTippa : n 'He drinks always'

Use of toTarntu :

The adjunct *toTarntu* (the past participle form of the verb *toTar* 'follow') is used with the meaning 'continuously'.

avan toTarntu maruntu ca : ppiTukiRa : n 'He is taking medicine continuously'

High frequency :
Use of aTikkaTi :

The adjunct *aTikkaTi* is used with the meaning 'often'.

avan aTikkaTi sikareTTu kuTikkiRa : n 'He somkes cigarette often'

Use of tirumpavum tirumpavum :

The adjunct *tirumpavum tirumpavum* ('again and again') is used with the meaning 'repeatedly'.

avaL tirumpavum tirumpavum kuLitta : L 'She took bath repeatedly'

Use of tavaRa : mal :

The adjunct *tavaRa : mal* ('without failing') is used with the meaning 'regularly'.

avL tavaRa : mal ko : yilukkup po : kiRa : L 'She goes to temple regularly'

Use of palataTavai :

The adjunct *pala taTavai* is used with the meaning 'many times'.

avaL pala taTavai pa : Tina : L 'She sang many times'.

Low frequency :
Use of eppoZuta : vatu :

The adjunct *appoZuta : vatu* gives the meaning 'some times'.

eppoZuta : vau avaL pa : Tuva : L 'She

sings some times'

Use of cila taTavai :

The adjunct *cila taTavai* gives the meaning 'a few times'.

avaL cila taTavai parisu va : nkiyirukki-Ra : L 'She has got prize for a few times'

Use of apu : rvama : ka and arita : ka :

The adjuncts *apu : rvama : ka* and *arita : ka* are used with the meaning 'rarely'.

avaL avanai apu : rvama : ka/arita : ka pa : rppa : : L 'She sees him rarely'

The temperal expressions discussed above play a vital part in signifying time references of the tense inflections of verb. This aspect is not discussed here as it is beyond the scope of this paper.

References

1. Leech, Geoffery N. 1969. Towards a semantic description of English. London : Longman.

2. Lyons, John. 1977. Semantics, Vol. 1 & 2. London : Cambridge University Press.

3. Rajendran, S. 1982 Semantics of spatial expressions in Tamil. 14th All India University Tamil Teachers' Association Conference *a : yvukko : vai*, vol. 2, ps. 262-67.